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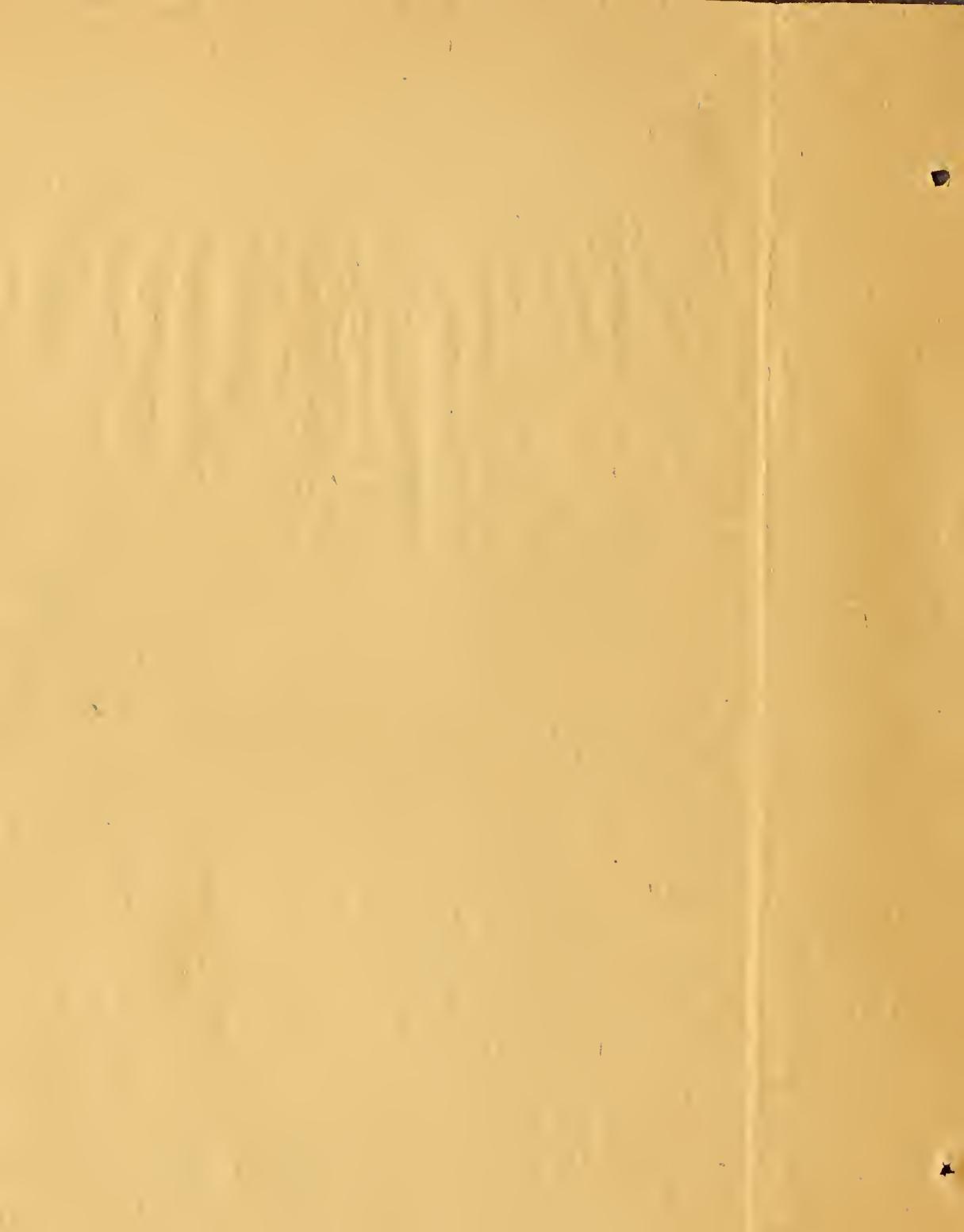
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DEVELOPMENTS IN NEGRO EXTENSION WORK

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DEVELOPMENTS IN NEGRO EXTENSION WORK*

C. B. Smith,
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There are three substantial measures of accomplishment in extension work, as follows:

- (1) The number of farm and home practices actually changed for the better as a result of extension work.
- (2) The number of people trained or stimulated to help themselves and others, usually called demonstrators or local leaders.
- (3) The number of young people trained in a knowledge of better farm and home practices - farmers of the future, trained through boys' and girls' club work.

In such studies as we have made of negro work in Georgia and Arkansas, where a total of 462 negro farm records were obtained, we find that 74 per cent of all the farms surveyed have made farm and home changes which they credit to extension work. They have made not only one change but an average of 3.4 changes per farm. This is a very good showing. It is above some States and about equal to the average of 12 Northern and Southern States in which surveys have been made. In one State, however, 92 out of each 100 farms surveyed, and in another 97 out of each 100 surveyed had made changes in farm and home practices. So we see there is still room-for improvement in both negro and white work, particularly in increasing the number of practices on each farm and in each home.

Now the thing that appears to be most effective in getting negro farmers to change their practices is what they see and what they hear, and relatively little what they read. (Table 1.)

* Address before the conference of supervisory negro extension agents, Orangeburg, S. C., January 26, 1927.

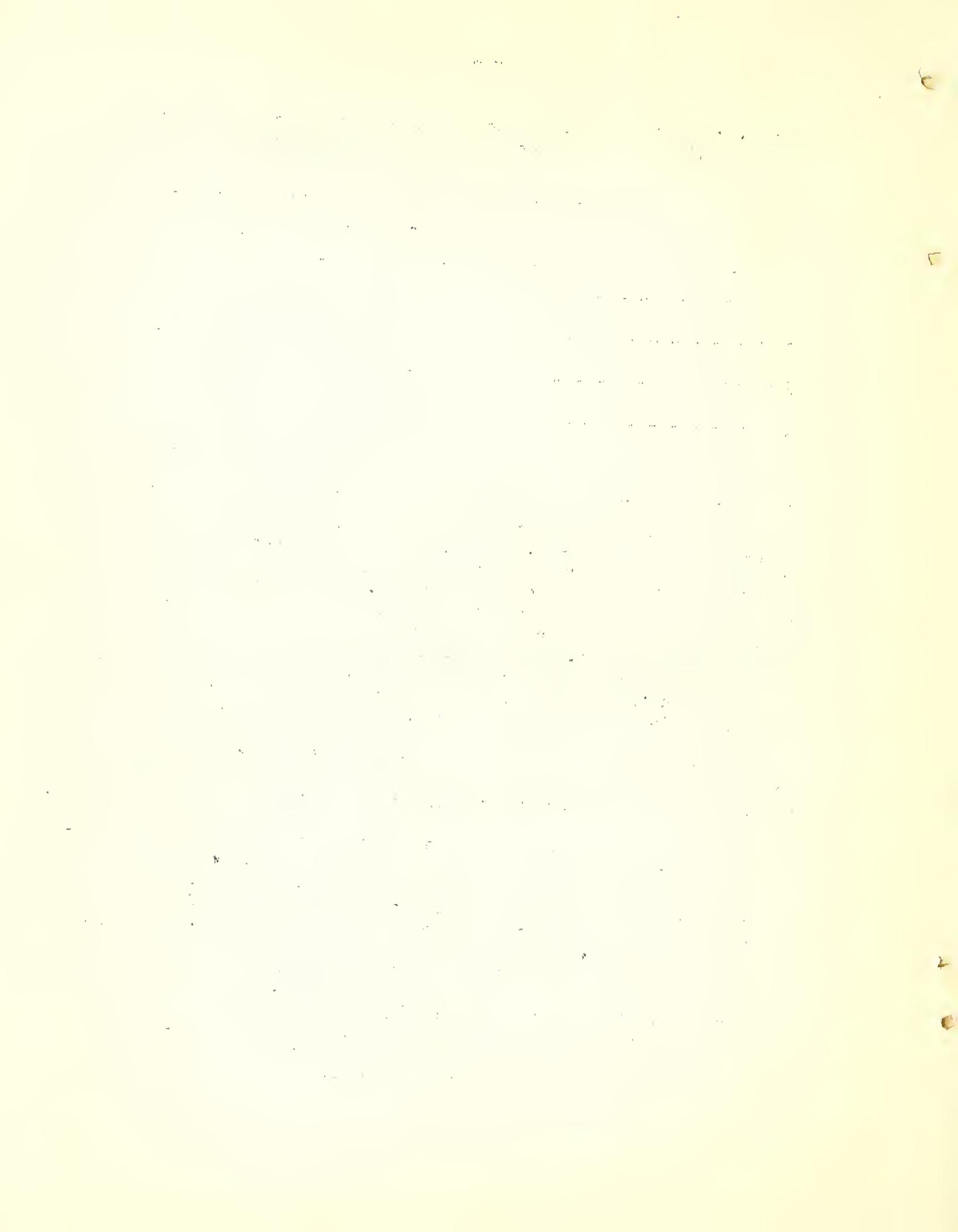
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Table 1. - Methods as Related to Percentages of Practices Adopted
(1171 Practices Adopted by Negro Farms and Homes)

Type of method	Percentage of practices	Basis of 100
Written - - - - -	13	8
Spoken - - - - -	69	43
Objective (eye) - - - - -	61	38
Indirect - - - - -	18	11
		100

Table 1 would seem to indicate that the negro farmer is greatly influenced by what he sees. Hence, we need many demonstrations, at least two or three in each community on each subject we are teaching, so that they will be within reach of every farmer. The spread of a demonstration rarely exceeds a radius of about 3 miles, unless we make special effort to extend it. The white agent and the negro agent ought to have a common program on this matter. A truth is a truth and a result is a result, whether obtained on a white or colored man's farm. The thing is, from the colored man's standpoint, to have a demonstration, something that can be seen, on his own or a near-by farm. The demonstration that can be seen also furnishes the material for the address that can be heard and the news item that can be read. Without the demonstration, progress may be very slow - with it, progress may be very rapid. Demonstrations, to be of value, must answer economic problems actually confronted by farm people.

The more people we can get to put on demonstrations without too great use of our time the better the results will be, for we are quite sure that the one who puts on the demonstration, at least, will profit by it. But, just to continue putting on demonstrations of the same kind in the same neighborhood year after year has a limit. Finally, when we are sure of our ground, we can make progress faster in getting the new practice adopted by special effort that will seek to interest everybody and get everybody to try the new things. Just how many demonstrations of a thing in a community are needed to make it carry over into the practice of all the people undoubtedly varies. If the demonstration with its accompanying publicity touches us closely in some vital way, relatively few may be needed.



Our studies make it apparent that not enough negroes are reading. What a comfort reading is! We can not hope to see everything in this world or even in the county or community in which we live; we can not expect to go to every field meeting or hear every address; but we can read and in our mind's eye can travel over the whole world, look into every county and every home, even vision the demonstration plots of our own county and profit by such contact.

If we expect to accomplish still greater results, we must have more negroes reading. Every boy and girl in every club should read. It may be that many of the older group can not read. Again, maybe you have not put simple enough literature in their hands. I have seen very few extension bulletins written by negroes for negroes in our extension work. I wonder if that is not part of your job as leaders.

Can you not get out some simplified one-syllable literature, well illustrated, that would help carry the message of better farming and home making? I have an idea your extension director would give most careful consideration to anything you might thus prepare. You might write it ostensibly for your club boys and girls but so simply that the old folks would find profit and joy in reading it. If your director found he could not publish it, he might send it on to us in Washington; and, if it were written broadly enough to cover two or three States or a whole region and written simply enough, we might publish it.

I wonder if in this group there are not at least one or two willing to try their hands at writing a four- to eight-page bulletin on some vital phase of farm or home work so that the negro farmer and his wife who have not had much schooling may yet feel the thrill of reading and perhaps get the habit to their everlasting profit.

All phases of publicity should deal largely with accomplishment of demonstrators. News items should deal with accomplishment of what is to be seen or has been seen at field meetings held at demonstrations, or tours which are extended field meetings. Educational exhibits may again emphasize the value of the demonstrations.

Of course, the force of the above procedure may be lost if accurate records are not obtained on a few of the best demonstrations. These records can be made most effective if the measurements are made before groups of interested farmers. The agent can again make valuable use of these records during the winter months at meetings through blackboard talks, reinforced with discussions by demonstrators.

These pamphlets should be well illustrated. Indeed, I can conceive of cases where the text would be very brief and the pictures very numerous. They must be good pictures, however, and each one tell a story.

Our study of negro extension work further shows that negro farmers who make some contact with the extension agent are five times as likely to make some change for the better in their farm and home practices as are the negro farmers who do not come in contact with the extension agent. There is a hint for us. We should meet as many farmers and farm women as practicable on their own farms and at meetings. We should attend their gatherings of various kinds and, wherever practicable, give a demonstration, lecture, or some other form of address that will carry the spirit and the way of better farming and home making.

The data gathered also show that the farmer who puts on a demonstration on the home farm or conducts some other extension activity is almost twice as certain to adopt in his permanent plans some improved practice as the man who comes and looks on. But the man who comes and looks on is three times as likely to adopt an improved practice as the man who stays away and is told about the demonstration or reads about it. We want, therefore, to get as many people out to our demonstration field meetings as possible, but do not fail to tell about your demonstration through the press and by letter and bulletin and radio; for, while the man who sees is most likely to make the change and adopt the practice, it must be remembered that, where tens see, hundreds hear; and still other hundreds read; and in the aggregate the actual numbers influenced to change their practices may be, and generally are, greater from hearing and reading than from seeing. But both what you hear and what you read is likely to be most influential if based on what has been demonstrated.

We do a good deal of our extension work through others - we have to if we are to get the work done. You see, we have more than 2,000 farm men, 2,000 farm women, and 2,000 farm boys and girls in each county that we want to get a helpful message to.

If one of our colleges had so large a number to instruct and had them all assembled on one college campus, it would take more than 600 teachers properly to instruct them, while we in our extension work rarely have more than four paid teachers in a county, and we have to deal with groups scattered over 300 or 400 square miles of territory. We have called to our assistance, therefore, local volunteer helpers and are using them more and more for both carrying on demonstrations and showing the better way. We usually call these helpers project leaders or local leaders.

Our studies in two States where special attention was given to this matter show that where we give these local leaders some special help and training they are more than twice as effective in reaching and influencing people to change their practices as local leaders who are given no special training. Even to meet the local leaders on a particular project for a day or two, two or three times a year nearly doubles their efficiency. The local leader profits by the stimulus that comes from meeting the extension agent and from getting technical advice.



Pick your best and most intelligent farm men and women for your volunteer helpers - people who have made some success in their work and whom the neighbors look up to. People like to follow real leaders.

Our job is teaching and we accomplish most if we teach through people who have made a success, rather than people whose work is indifferent good or a failure.

Our studies indicate that the college-trained local leader influences twice as many people to change their practices as the local leader who has had only a common-school education. Since there are so many more people who have a common-school education than a high-school or college education, the bulk of your local leaders will necessarily be of the common-school type. Work with them; give them guidance and training, and they will do much.

In closing, may I say a word as to the prospects in extension work. Additional funds for further developing the extension system are on the way, sufficient, we hope, so that in time the entire salary of all county extension agents may be paid from college and Federal funds. The bill providing for an increase of \$6,480,000 may not pass this session of Congress, but it probably will next session, and negro extension work will undoubtedly feel the influence of these increases.

Table 2. - Size of Farms as Related to Adoption of Practices
(462 negro farms - 2 States)
(Cultivated acreage)

Size	Number of farms	Average size acres	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting practices	Practices Agri. H. Econ. Any	Practices adopted per 100 farms
Small (0-30)-----	268	21	58	57	37	66
Medium (31-60)-----	126	45	27	71	51	83
Large (61 and over) -	68	99	15	85	63	87

Table 3. - Contact with Extension Workers as Related to Farms Adopting Practices
(462 negro farms - 2 States)

Group	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Practices adopted per 100 farms
			Agri.	H.	Econ.	
Farms making contact with extension agents -	349	76	76	58	86	316
Farms making no contacts - - -	113	24	34	4	36	60

Table 4. - Participation in extension activities as related to adoption of practices
(462 negro farms - 2 States)

Group	Number of farms	Percentage of all farms	Percentage of farms adopting practices			Practices adopted per 100 farms
			Agri.	H.	Econ.	
Farms with extension activity on farm or in home - - - -	170	37	85	79	96	410
Other farms participating in extension activities -	139	30	72	45	83	256
Farms not participating - - - -	153	33	39	6	41	77

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Table 5. - Attitude toward Extension
(462 negro farms - 2 States)

Group	Percentage of farms
Favorable - - - - -	66
Indifferent - - - - -	29
Opposed - - - - -	0
No attitude reported -	5

Table 6. - Negro Farms and Homes Definitely Reached by Extension
(462 Farms - 2 States)

Number of records obtained - - - - -	462
Percentage of farms adopting any practices - - - - -	74
Average number of all practices adopted per farm - - - - -	3.4
Percentage of farms adopting agricultural practices - - - - -	65
Average number of agricultural practices adopted per farm - - -	2.4
Percentage of homes adopting home economics practices - - - - -	44
Average number of home economics practices adopted per home - -	2.1

